

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 265684  
ORIGIN EB-08

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ISO-00 L-03 AID-05 SCS-03 /030 R

DRAFTED BY EB/IFD/OIA:WGBLACK:ME  
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AF/W:BKIRKPATRICK  
AF/EP:LMWHITE  
L/AF:MMATHESON  
L/EB:SGUDGEON  
AID/AFR/SFWA:GMCARTHUR  
-----103547 061011Z /12  
R 051841Z NOV 77  
FM SECSTATE WASHDC  
TO AMEMBASSY COTONOU

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EINV

SUBJECT: CONFISCATION OF JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES ASSETS IN  
BENIN

REFS: (A) STATE 206009; (B) COTONOU 1541

1. JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES REPRESENTATIVE HAS CONTACTED  
DEPARTMENT SEVERAL TIMES IN LAST TWO MONTHS TO LEARN WHAT  
ACTION GPRB HAS TAKEN TO CONSIDER JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES  
COMPENSATION CLAIM FOR PROPERTIES SEIZED BY GPRB IN APRIL  
1976. WITNESSES REP HAS BEEN INFORMED OF DEMARCHE REPORTED  
PER REF B AND TOLD THAT WE WOULD FOLLOW UP IF NO FURTHER  
ACTION TAKEN BY GPRB.

2. IN VIEW OF THIS, DEPARTMENT BELIEVES THAT EMBASSY  
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PAGE 02 STATE 265684

SHOULD AGAIN RAISE ISSUE OF COMPENSATION WITH GPRB.  
REQUEST THAT YOU SEEK APPOINTMENT WITH APPROPRIATE SENIOR  
LEVEL FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIAL TO DELIVER FOLLOWING  
NOTE.

3. -- (OPENING) THE EMBASSY HAS THE HONOR TO CALL TO THE  
ATTENTION OF THE FOREIGN MINISTRY TO THE MATTER OF THE

CLAIM FOR COMPENSATION FOR THE EXPROPRIATION OF PROPERTIES OWNED BY THE JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY.

-- THE EMBASSY PRESENTED TO THE GPRB IN FEBRUARY 1977 A CLAIM PREPARED BY THE JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION WAS SUBMITTED BY THE JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES TO THE EMBASSY OF THE GPRB IN WASHINGTON IN JUNE OF THIS YEAR SO THAT THE GPRB COULD RESPOND AND ARRANGEMENTS FOR COMPENSATION COULD BE MADE.

-- IN THE EIGHTEEN MONTHS SINCE THE SEIZURE OF THE JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES PROPERTIES, THE EMBASSY HAS ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS EXPRESSED ITS HOPE THAT THE GPRB AND THE JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES WOULD REACH A MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE SETTLEMENT OF THIS ISSUE. ALTHOUGH THE GPRB HAS NOTED THAT IT IS REVIEWING THE CLAIM, IT IS THE EMBASSY'S UNDERSTANDING THAT THE GPRB HAS NOT YET TAKEN ANY ACTION TO ARRANGE FOR COMPENSATION OR TO DISCUSS THE SPECIFICS OF THE CLAIM WITH THE JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES.

-- THE USG IS CONCERNED OVER THE LACK OF ACTION ON THIS CLAIM BOTH BECAUSE PROMPT, ADEQUATE AND EFFECTIVE COMPENSATION IS REQUIRED UNDER INTERNATIONAL LAW, AND BECAUSE CERTAIN US LEGISLATION REQUIRES THE TERMINATION OF US BILATERAL ASSISTANCE, ELIGIBILITY FOR TRADE PREFERENCES TO DEVELOPING COUNTRIES AND US SUPPORT FOR LOANS IN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 STATE 265684

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT BANKS WITH RESPECT TO GOVERNMENTS WHICH EXPROPRIATE PROPERTIES OWNED BY US CITIZENS AND FAIL TO TAKE APPROPRIATE STEPS TO PROVIDE SUCH COMPENSATION IN ACCORDANCE WITH INTERNATIONAL LAW.

-- THE EMBASSY HOPES THAT THE GPRB WILL TAKE APPROPRIATE STEPS TO COMPENSATE THE JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES IN THE NEAR FUTURE. SUCH STEPS COULD INCLUDE, BUT WOULD NOT BE LIMITED TO, ARBITRATION, AGREEMENT TO INDEPENDENT VALUATION OF THE PROPERTY OR GOOD FAITH NEGOTIATIONS TO REACH A MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE SETTLEMENT OF THE CLAIM (CLOSE). CHRISTOPHER

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## Message Attributes

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**Capture Date:** 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** ASSETS, NATIONALIZATION, COMPENSATION, MISSIONARIES  
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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
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**Disposition Date:** 22 May 2009  
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**Drafter:** WGBLACK:ME  
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**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
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**Reference:** 77 STATE 206009, 77 COTONOU 1541  
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**Subject:** CONFISCATION OF JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES ASSETS IN BENIN  
**TAGS:** EINV, DM, JEHOVEHS WITNESSES  
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**Review Markings:**  
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